NOTES ON THE HOUSES IN CURTEA DE ARGEŞ

342 THE SMALL TOWN of Curtea de Argeş has from time to time suffered destruction from fire, in consequence of which there is very little to be found in the way of early buildings.

The oldest house in the town is that occupied by the present mayor and his family, and they claim that their ancestors have held the property since about 1630, when it was built.

The illustration (op. p. 28) shows it to be a well-built brick structure with a fairly steep roof of dark brown shingles. The brickwork is whitewashed and is very solidly constructed. The present family uses the entire first floor as their dwelling-house. At some recent period part of the ground floor was converted into a restaurant. The spacious rooms under the balcony are used partly for the purpose of a store and the mayor has a private office there.

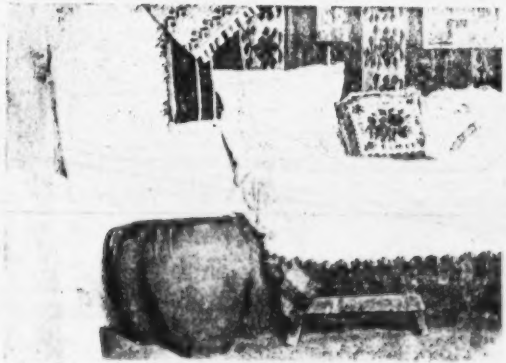
353 THE DWELLING has a peculiar and individual charm. The furniture is mostly in the traditional peasant style, and much of it is similar to that found in the simple houses, but shows a superior workmanship and quality. The bed, as in the living-room of every peasant, has retained its traditional place in this house, though in this case its purpose to-day is that of a divan or sofa. The coverings and cushions, hand-embroidered, and the woven wall-hangings round the bed, are such as may be seen throughout the countryside, though richer in the materials used and more artistic than most of those to be seen in the peasants' cottages, where often the primary colours are used with little attempt to grade the design by the use of intermediate shades. Small decorated patterns are to be found on the walls. The large living-room has an elaborate and beautifully-painted ceiling—a thing rarely found in the country houses. Modern sanitation, water-supply, etc., have been put into the house. The women of the present family choose to maintain peasant tradition in dress.

[336] [291]

342 The spacious balcony, approached from the courtyard, serves for reception of guests in summer. Here meals are taken, and a good many of the household occupations are carried on.

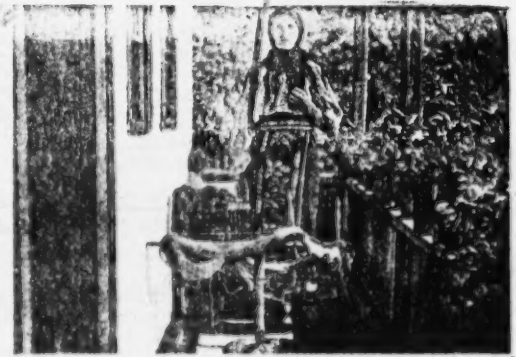
2 [See pp. 28a (HRAF pagination) -- Analyst]

353



(House B.)
Curtea de Arges. The interior of the potter's house—his bedroom. Large unbaked pots were standing on the floor.

Photo by H. J. Howard



(House A.)
Curtea de Arges. Primitive arrangement for winding warp lengths on balcony of house measured up by M. Tatton and R. Jones

[Page 30 a]

323

(House B.)
Curtea de Arges. The potter's kiln in his back yard. A primitive affair of sticks, poles and clay.

Photo by H. J. Howard

(House A.)
Curtea de Arges. Part of [illegible]. Rugs, blankets, cushions, bed-covers, etc. *Listed by Miss R. Jones.*

Photo by H. J. Howard

PLATE V

874 THE TECHNICAL or Trade School is one of forty such schools in the country. The Minister of Education has ordered this number to be doubled. The boys come from all districts and can go on to a higher grade Trade School. There is a still higher grade of school in Roumania called the Academy, from which pupils are turned out as teachers.

IN THIS TRADE School at Curtea de Argeş the boys live in and pay an inclusive fee of 4,500 lei per annum; those attending as day boys pay only 760 lei per annum. Two-thirds of these fees must be paid at the beginning of the session; the cost of material is not included.

Boys can enter between the ages of 11 and 15; the number taken is 100. They are divided into four classes. The subjects taught are Woodwork, Pottery and Tailoring. In woodwork, when the boys leave they are considered to have qualified in all the processes of house-building and furnishing.

[32] In pottery, the chief industry of this town, the *traditional* shapes, colouring and decoration (mostly of ships) are charming, but *modern* designs and shapes are less good and often tasteless.

[33] THE CLASSROOMS are airy and heated by stoves. The boys sit in couples. The walls are hung with pictures of Roumanian history and of architectural interest, e.g. York Minster, Notre Dame, the Forum, etc. Each room has a religious picture. The woodwork room is large; each bench has a wooden vice; the wood is neatly stacked on a large shelf a few feet from the roof. Few tools were seen, as they were being prepared for next session. There is a room set apart for exhibiting the work done. All articles are for sale, and the pupil gets most of the money. Both the french polishing and the chip carving reach an excellent standard.

[ ] THE MILITARY SERVICE required from boys attending Trade Schools is of one year's duration only. There are in the country five Higher Trade Schools—at Bucureşti, Braşov, Craiova, Iassi and Turgul Mureş.

N. H. S.

RUMANIA EDI

The hipped roof is rather flat and made of corn straw or reed, about 40 centimeters thick. The frame is often of the collar type, horizontal beams supporting opposing rafters (figs. 60a, 64). Pan tiles appear only in isolated instances. In 1918 sheet iron was becoming popular because it was economical and saved time and effort. It was generally painted red-brown. Chimneys are usually inadequate or lacking (Jänecke, 1918: 11). 342 [335] [327]

Every house has an open veranda (prispa) on at least one side which may or may not have a low banister. It is slightly elevated from the ground and is protected by an extension of the eaves. While many Moldavian houses consist of only one room, even the smallest house in Wallachia has an anteroom (tinda). Here the main room is called odaia and has a special stove that is heated by a flue from the hearth in the anteroom. Often an additional odaia is added on the other side of the anteroom forming a symmetrical three-room house. Sometimes additional units are built onto the house on one or both of the narrow sides (figs. 57c, 58). The roof is extended over them in the form of a catalida (fig. 57a). These units are used for storage of agricultural tools, stables, summer kitchens, etc. If two are not sufficient, three or more units may be added. The prispa may be extended alongside the annex; or, when the annex protrudes in front of the house, the prispa may stop at the annex wall (fig. 57c). Occasionally a large house may have two parallel rows of rooms. However, this arrangement complicates the roof construction, which in this case is generally unsuccessful (Jänecke, 1918: 11-16). [341] [354]

The interior is very simple. The anteroom serves for the storage of house implements; maize is kept in wooden boxes and placed along the wall, and there is also a small handmill for grinding maize. A large oven with a hearth in front of it is located at the wall opposite the door (figs. 57c, 58). The anteroom has no ceiling. When two odaias are present one is used for both living and sleeping quarters, while the other is used for the storage of blankets, carpets etc. It is somewhat of a guest-room. [251] [353] [354]

In the Rumanian house special attention has been given to the hearth and stove, and the whole house can be said to have been built around the hearth. The hearth is the showpiece of the room. Arched over the hearth is a decorated mantel on which cooking utensils are placed. Niches on either side of the hearth are provided for the same purpose. Because of the inflammability of the straw roof, the chimney is of brick (these are the only bricks in the house and are made by the peasants themselves). The stoves in the living room are of unusual construction. The most spectacular of these are the columnar stoves which are not only beautiful but also effective. To the main part of the stove have been added graceful clay pipes which are either arranged symmetrically or placed on one side. The better ones resemble organs. The rest of the stove is also made of clay bricks set in mud mortar and covered with a layer of plaster of a lime and sand mixture. Decoration of clay or plaster may be added. These stoves are generally built by Gypsies. 354